The Wellesley Amateur Radio Society: 1960s

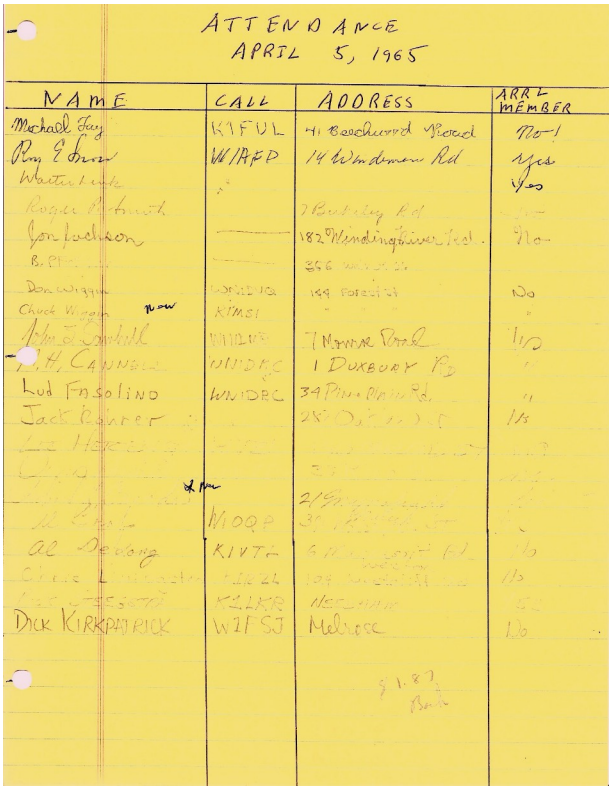
By Scott Nacey, KK6IK

My Perspective: From a 2025 Vantage Point

I was born in 1960, so although I was alive during this important decade, I was not aware, nor part of the 1960's Amateur Radio community. Given this fact, I am a curious choice of authors for this series of articles but as I read through the Wellesley Amateur Radio Society (WARS) archives for the period, I was touched by all the names that I recognized from my late 1970's introduction to the club. As my generation of high school kids took over WARS board offices and drove club activities, we saw the older members as valued, but mostly silent participants in the club. In 2025, looking at the archives, with the perspective from 65 years of life, I feel a deep connection to these older club members and amazement at what they accomplished and saw as the technology world changed from 1960 to 1969 – from surplus tubes, parts and Civil Defense (CD) radios, SSB, early transistors to, as seen by a line-printed club membership printout in 1969, computers.

The SparkGap had not been "invented" in the 1960's so few personal details remained of the club. I had to reconstruct this decade from the limited meeting notes, secretary's reports and attendance lists. However, rather than just recounting all the activities WARS did in the 1960's – monthly meetings with coffee and doughnuts, extra-curricular visits to CD sites in Framingham and WBZ-TV transmitter sites, field day and ARRL films throughout the year – I decided to highlight a few key individuals who served as WARS leadership. I feel that these people helped to drive the change from a Civil Defense-centric focus to one that combined busy work and social lives in Wellesley with Amateur Radio.

Also note that this account of the Wellesley Amateur Radio Society (WARS) during the 1960s has been prepared from the club's original records—its meeting notices, secretary's reports, attendance logs, and related documents preserved in the WARS binders of the period. I had to reconstruct the lives of a few of our club leaders based on snippets found in the Wellesley Townsman and QST archives as well as the Digital Library of Amateur Radio & Communications (DLARC).



ATTENDANCE
APRIL 5, 1965

NAME	CALL	ADDRESS	ARRL MEMBER
Michael Fay	K1FUL	41 Beechwood Road	No-1
Roy E Snow	W1AFD	14 Windmere Rd	Yes
Walter Lenk			Yes
Roger A Smith		7 Bunting Rd	
Jon Jackson		182 Windingbrook Rd.	No
B. Pl...		356 ... St	
Don Wiggin		199 Forest St	No
Chuck Wiggin now	K1MSI		
... Campbell	W1DLW	7 Manor Road	Yes
... H. Cannell	W1DRC	1 Duxbury Rd	
Lud Fasolino	W1DRC	39 Pine Plain Rd.	
Jack Painter		25 ...	Yes
... Hayes			
...			
...		2/5...	
...	W1OQP	37 ...	
Al Deyong	K1YTU	6 ...	Yes
...		104 ...	Yes
...	K1LKR	...	
Dick Kirkpatrick	W1FSJ	Melrose	No
		5 1.80 Bank	

An Attendance sheet from the April 5, 1965 WARS Meeting
source: WARS archive

The WARS Community

Throughout the 1960s, the Wellesley Amateur Radio Society (WARS) reflected both the technical energy and neighborly warmth of New England's postwar radio culture. Membership lists from the decade show a steady increase from a few dozen active hams to nearly forty by 1968, blending older founders from the 1950's with a younger wave of **WA1 and WN1** licensees many trained in the club's novice classes. In fact, the attendance sheets for the late 1969 novice class include several of my elementary and high school friends! WARS was notably inclusive—our rosters also included unlicensed associates, spouses, and local friends who supported club activities and Field Day operations.

Most members were just "regular" people who worked in insurance, social work and, a select few, in Technology. Members were active in area churches, participated actively in social clubs and theatre companies – but were also Amateur Radio Operators involved in our AM Civil Defense nets every Sunday. Undoubtedly many WARS members and Wellesley residents in the 1960's helped shape the world that we now inhabit.

In a short series of articles based on 1960's records, I will highlight three WARS members as examples of our neighbors in the 1960's: Al Graf, W1OQP 1960's WARS President, Walt Lenk, K1YTU 1960's WARS Secretary and Hank Cross, W1OOP a technically influential WARS member. I also offer short reminders of the changes in commercial HF gear that hams saw in the 1960's. Enjoy!